



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Walla Walla District
Public Affairs Office

News Release

News Release No. 03-04

Date: Jan. 31, 2003

Contact: Steve Fink

Phone: (509) 527-7613

Coppei Creek flood control project proposed for Waitsburg, Wash.

Walla Walla, Wash., — Swollen rivers raged out their banks and inundated homes, roads, businesses, sewer systems and railroads throughout the Walla Walla Valley in the floods of February 1996.

The town of Waitsburg, Wash., bordered on all sides by the Touchet River and Coppei Creek, was cut-off as rivers rolled out of their banks and into homes and businesses. Two-hundred of the 500 homes in Waitsburg were flooded, the sewage treatment plant was compromised and downtown businesses and basements were filled with water, mud and debris.

Waitsburg regularly experiences significant, short flood events. Each year there is a one-percent chance of a 100-year flood and most recently three significant flood events occurred in 1964, 1974 and in 1996.

“These events usually result in short sections of levees being constructed under emergency situations. Although this helps during the event, it does not provide continuous protection for Waitsburg from Coppei Creek flooding,” said Steve Fink, a project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District.

In 1999, Waitsburg requested the Corps’ assistance to develop a flood reduction project for Coppei Creek.

“Memories of flooding quickly fade and it is difficult to picture the normally quiet streams as a threat. But the Coppei has cause significant damage and could continue to do so. A flood damage reduction project would provide protection and benefits to the city of Waitsburg,” said Fink.

Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 201 N. Third Ave, Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876
Phone (509) 527-7020 FAX (509) 527-7824 CELL (509) 520-1468
Web site: www.nww.usace.army.mil E-mail: cenww-pa@usace.army.mil

The Corps' proposed project consists of a 1,670-foot offset levee and a 460-foot floodwall upstream of the U.S. Highway 12 Bridge across Coppei Creek and a 400-foot floodwall and a 1,740-foot offset levee downstream of the Highway 12 Bridge across Coppei Creek. The offset levees and floodwalls would be constructed on the north bank of Coppei Creek.

—MORE—

COPPEI CREEK/2-2-2

The Corps' project is designed for a 100-year flood and will accommodate 2,000 cubic feet per second of flow. The average annual flow is 300 cfs.

The Washington State Department of Transportation will replace the existing U.S. Highway 12 Bridge with a new one that has more flow capacity in 2004.

The bridge is not part of the Corps project, but it is sized around the design capacity of the project. The purpose of the Coppei Creek Flood Control Project is to prevent water from Coppei Creek entering Waitsburg. Floodwater will be forced to stay in the Coppei Creek channel and floodway. This project just includes flooding caused by Coppei Creek.

"Downstream of the Highway 12 Bridge, the floodwall will keep high velocity flows in the main channel reducing the possibility of floodwaters breaking out into a new channel. But if this happens, the offset levee will direct this flow back to the channel upstream of the Seventh Street Bridge," said Fink.

The cost of the project is projected at \$1.5 million. Funding for detailed design for this flood damage reduction project was requested by the Corps this year and was approved. After a project cooperation agreement is signed, the sponsor will carry 35 percent of the project cost and the Corps will fund the remaining 65 percent. Construction on the project could begin as early as 2004. The project is expected to prevent \$286,100 a year in damages. With the cost of the project, net benefits would be \$94,000 annually.

The community is invited to an open house, held by the Waitsburg Coppei Flood Control District and Corps, that will provide more information on the flood control project on Feb. 27 at

Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 201 N. Third Ave, Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876 Phone (509) 527-7020 FAX (509) 527-7824 CELL (509) 520-1468 Web site: www.nwww.usace.army.mil E-mail: cenww-pa@usace.army.mil
--

the Waitsburg Elementary Multipurpose Room, 3 – 7 p.m. Representatives from the Corps and the Coppei Flood Control District will be available to answer questions. For more information, contact Fink at (509) 527- 7613.

-30-